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USSR: Soviet party boss Brezhnev reportedly suffers from a heart condition which somewhat limits his activities.



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Brezhnev is known to have persistent health problems [redacted] He has not, however, been off the job for any lengthy period during the past year. During the Middle East crisis he complained about the pressure and long hours, but all evidence indicates that he played an active and central role.

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[redacted] there are "a hell of a lot of Stalinists" in Soviet society and in the highest echelons of the party and that a hard fight has to be put up for each step of progress. [redacted]

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Congo (Kinshasa): The mercenaries' goals are still obscure.

They may be planning to cross the border into Rwanda and try to escape by air. There are indications, however, that they may instead proceed through Bukavu and continue south to Katanga. If the mercenaries do head south, they may leave their hostages, including about 20 whites, in Rwanda.

US and Belgian officials are concerned about the fate of civilians in Bukavu if the mercenaries leave. There seems little doubt that returning Congolese troops would kill many Congolese as well as some of the approximately 50 whites remaining in the area.

Belgian Foreign Minister Harmel, who is exceedingly nervous about the disruptive potential of a southward move by the mercenaries, has suggested that President Mobutu be urged to negotiate with them. Harmel believes a negotiated settlement could be made to look like a Congolese victory. [REDACTED]

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Southeast Asia: The new regional organization formed by five Southeast Asian nations will apparently be a loose grouping emphasizing social and economic cooperation.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations was formed by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Singapore. Membership is open to all south-east Asian nations. The new organization will be very similar to, and probably in due course will replace, the Association of Southeast Asia, which includes only Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

The preamble to the declaration establishing the organization calls for further strengthening of regional cooperation and reaffirms that all foreign bases are "temporary and remain only with the express concurrence of the countries concerned." This is compromise wording because the Philippines had wanted to eliminate any references to foreign military bases.

While the new pact represents a move toward improved regional cooperation, long-standing divisive factors will continue to pose obstacles. Among these are Malaysia's suspicions of Indonesia's ambitions for hegemony in Southeast Asia and the fears of predominantly Chinese Singapore of being swallowed up by its populous Malay neighbors. [REDACTED]

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